

## Dialectical Behavior Therapy

Literature review updated August 2015.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Dialectical Behavior Therapy is a cognitive behavioral treatment for individuals with complex and difficult to treat mental disorders. DBT was originally developed by Marsha Linehan at the University of Washington to treat chronically suicidal individuals but has been adapted for clients who have difficulty regulating their emotions. DBT focuses on the following four objectives: (1) enhancing youth behavioral skills in dealing with difficult situations, (2) motivating youth to change dysfunctional behaviors, (3) ensuring the new skills are used in daily institutional life, and (4) training and consultation to improve the counselor's skills. For this particular study, DBT was delivered to youth who were convicted of crimes and serving sentences at a state juvenile institution.

### Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

| Outcomes measured | No. of effect sizes | Treatment N | Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis |       |     |                             |       |     | Unadjusted effect size (random effects model) |         |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|---|-------|-----|-----------------------------|-------|-----|---|---------|
|                   |                     |             | First time ES is estimated  |       |     | Second time ES is estimated |       |     |   |         |
|                   |                     |             | ES  | SE    | Age | ES                          | SE    | Age | ES  | p-value |
| Crime             | 1                   | 62          | -0.347  | 0.225 | 18  | -0.347                      | 0.225 | 28  | -0.347  | 0.122   |

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

## Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

See WSIPP report: *Recidivism Findings for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration's Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program: Final Report*

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